A Weekend to Bend the Course of History

Are you concerned about the many oil projects developing in our community?

Are you concerned about the growing climate crisis?

Do you want your representatives to take action on the most important issue of our day?

Then come to Mitchell Park in San Luis Obispo on Sunday, September 21, at 2 p.m. Bring a sign to tell this community why you want action on climate change.

This event is being held in conjunction with millions of people who will be gathering that day all over the world.

Contact Heidi Harmon for questions and details:
sacredheart9395@yahoo.com
805-550-8444.

In September, global heads of state -- and the global media -- will be in New York City for a historic summit on climate change. With our future on the line, we will take a weekend and use it to bend the course of history.

New York City will see a climate mobilization unprecedented in size, beauty, and impact. But this moment will not even really be about the summit. Our demand is for Action Now, Not Words: take the action necessary to create a world with an economy that works for people and the planet now. In short, we want a world safe from the ravages of climate change.

To do that, we need to act -- together.

“Since we’ll never have the cash to compete with ExxonMobil, we better work in the currencies we can muster: bodies, spirit, passion.”

- Bill McKibben
A Basin Too Far

Balancing the Paso Robles groundwater basin may be above the pay grade of the SLO County Board of Supervisors

In his August 8 Tribune column (“Government a boon to the people”), Phil Dirks neatly summed up the official view of AB 2453, the bill to establish a Paso Robles Basin Water District:

Local government listened, and we now stand a good chance of forming a district to manage the dwindling Paso Robles ground-water basin. The state Legislature seems ready now to approve a basin management plan. It’s based on a compromise proposed by two organizations, one representing the basin’s large landowners and the other the small ones. They originally opposed the idea, but then found common ground.

They were acknowledged by local government — our county supervisors — who forwarded their proposal to our state assemblyman, Katcho Achadjian. The state Legislature is now reported ready to approve a Paso Robles basin management plan derived from the original compromise.

Five days later, the Senate passed the bill and it went on to the Assembly, where it quickly died at the Governor for his signature. It’s a nice story, due to the omission of details. In truth, Mr. Dirks couldn’t have picked a better example of the failure of local government and local control.

Here are the parts of the story that the Tribune, our County Supervisors and Assemblyman Achadjian have resolutely ignored.

The perils of false compromise. The Paso Robles Agricultural Alliance and Groundwater Solutions — representing the largest landowners over the basin and insisting on a one-acre, one-vote district — rolled Pro Water Equity, which abandoned its position of one-person/one-vote and settled for a permanent three-seat minority for non-landowning voters, with the other six seats elected on the basis of acreage. Multiple PRO Water Equity board and committee members subsequently resigned in protest. The Board of Supervisors and local media embraced the notion that the cave-in of Pro Water Equity to PRAAGS represented the will of the people.

Actual public opinion. It pleased the Board majority to believe that the overwhelming opposition to the “hybrid” district that they heard at every Board hearing on the subject came from a few obstructionists. Those alleged obstructionists included North County Watch, Sierra Club California, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, the Planning and Conservation League, California Teamsters Public Affairs Council, Defenders of Wildlife, Center for Biological Diversity, Clean Water Action, Food and Water Watch, Southern California Waterastable Alliance, and a Community Water Impact Network and California Coastal Protection Network. As we wrote in the June 13 edition of the Tribune: “None of these organizations oppose management of the Paso Robles groundwater basin. All have been involved in the problem of how best to manage the rights to safe, clean water sources for humans and wildlife. None of the groups oppose local management of groundwater basins, and all support water management districts based on the election of directors and formation vote based on the principle of one person, one vote.”

On its first vote in the Assembly, AB 2453 received 150 letters in opposition and 10 in support. The broad unpopularity of the bill will likely come back to bite when the time comes for residents to vote on whether to form a district.

Democracy matters. The biggest landowners over the basin have made their position clear, in public hearings and in flyers circulated by PRAAGS. They want a district to undertake the infrastructure to bring more water to make possible the endless expansion of vineyards, and they are adamantly opposed to any restrictions on their pumping from the basin or any measures that might otherwise tame their water consumption in any way. Their numbers are small but their influence is great, and with the one-person/one-vote model
The update of San Luis Obispo’s Land Use and Circulation Elements needs some vision

For the next twenty years, development and transportation planning in the city of San Luis Obispo will be guided by the policies that the City adopts in the update of its Land Use and Circulation Elements (LUCE). This is to say, the nature and character of the city and the quality of life for its residents is being determined right now by the City Planning Commission and City Council.

To our SLO members: This is going to happen with or without your participation. We strongly suggest you opt for “with.”

That’s because there is a considerable gap between aspirations and outcomes in both the updated plans and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that accompanies them. We are urging the City to do more in the way of crafting specific measures in all three documents that will serve to provide additional mitigation of currently unmitigatable Class 1 significant impacts identified in the EIR and continue to raise the bar for protection of the environment, public health and the quality of life.

SLO is nationally known for its planning legacy. (First in the city to ban smoking in the workplace and bars, bans on outdoor smoking and drive-thru windows, the decision to create Mission Plaza rather than build a parking garage, the creation of a Natural Resources Manager position and programs to acquire open space and create a green belt.) Twenty years ago, SLO was at the leading edge of the American planning renaissance and created the quality of life that made SLO “one of the happiest cities in the United States.”

It did not get there by adopting a policy of adherence to the status quo.

The focus of the LUCE update in planning for the next twenty years should be to match or exceed the legacy of the last twenty years, laying out a future for San Luis Obispo commensurate with the accomplishments of the past.

The EIR, in its consideration of measures to mitigate the impacts of future development, offers sad evidence that the few attempts by the LUCE Task Force to do so have been struck out of the public review draft and replaced by generic directives to comply with existing ordinances, specific plans and design standards.

The requirement of providing mitigation for potential impacts provides the City with an opportunity to innovate. This update will serve as the planning bible for the next twenty years, but in analyzing mitigation measures the EIR offers more of those generic directives, hewing to the standard practice of simply citing compliance with the Building Code.

City residents have made it very clear, in extensive 1994 and 2012 surveys conducted in the course of preparing the Land Use Element and its current update, that they value this goal above all others.

Unfortunately, the highest priority of city residents has not been reflected in the budget process, the City Council’s goal-setting (open space preservation disappeared as a Major City Goal in 2009) or the City’s site design guidelines that permit overburdened neighborhoods and an equally overburdened resource that was intended to serve the open space needs of residents.

Delete language implementing the Economic Development Strategic Plan and all references to its concept that new development should pay a fair share of the costs incurred for the benefits residents, tourism programs should not include the state or national-level marketing of the City’s designated Open Space areas, thereby sparing overburdened neighborhoods and an equally overburdened resource that was intended to serve the open space needs of residents.

In conformance with the City’s Open Space ordinance, which mandates that the City’s open space areas shall be adequately maintained for the benefit of residents, tourism programs should not include the state or national-level marketing of the City’s designated Open Space areas, thereby sparing overburdened neighborhoods and an equally overburdened resource that was intended to serve the open space needs of residents.

The LUCE Update plans to Make Climate Change Worse

SLO’s current greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies should result in reduced GHG emissions by 2020. But the LUCE Update projects that its proposed land use and transportation policies will result in the City exceeding its Target Emissions Limit by 86,200 metric tons by 2035. The City will need to adopt additional GHG reduction measures if it is to stay on track of the state’s long-term emission greenhouse gas reduction goals, which call for emission cuts 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

The LUCE Update

• The City should consider, not “encour- age” the use of techniques to facilitate rainfall percolation for roof areas and outdoor hardscaped areas.

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Dear County Health Commission...

On May 20, SLO Clean Water Action delivered 4,000 signatures to the Board of Supervisors asking them to ban fracking in SLO County.

At their August 11 meeting, the SLO County Health Commission got an earful on the potential impacts of fracking on human health. About twenty people showed up to voice their concerns and ask the Commission to contact the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation to ban fracking.

The Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club submitted the document at right as our comments.

The Board has directed Assistant County Administrative Officer Guy Savage to prepare a report on the impacts of unconventional oil and gas well stimulation — including hydraulic fracturing and acidization — and the response of local governments to the spread of this practice in California. As we go to press, the staff report is expected to be heard at the Board of Supervisors in late summer or early fall, at which time staff will seek guidance from the Board — i.e. whether to move forward with a ban, moratorium or other action.

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Community + Choice = Clean Energy + Local Control

On July 24, with an assist from the Santa Lucia Chapter, SLO Clean Energy held a key forum in the long-term effort to bring Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) to the Central Coast.

Cordell Stillman, chief engineer for the Sonoma Water Agency, came to the SLO City Library to tell attendees about the benefits of CCA.

Sonoma County is the second jurisdiction in California to get a CCA program up and running, and Stillman quickly laid out the case for CCA. "Having a CCA means you can determine the source and content of the energy a community consumes, providing rate stabilization and local control of energy programs, competition for the big utilities and choice for the customers, encouraging innovation. Net revenues go back into the community, stimulating the local economy with job creation and energy efficiency programs."

Sonoma Clean Power has already cut the county’s greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent, delivering 33 percent renewable energy, 1.5 times more clean power than PG&E, at 5 percent lower rates (a percentage that's bound to grow as PG&E's rates are set to head skyward over the next three years).

The state’s first CCA program, Marin Clean Energy, encountered “vicious” resistance from PG&E, said Stillman, showering their prospective customers with trumped-up CCA horror stories, but a law was subsequently passed "saying you can’t do that anymore.”

With the success of the Marin and Sonoma programs, getting a CCA up and running has become easier, faster and cheaper.

His talk was very well received by the room. The day after Stillman spoke, SLO Clean Energy arranged a luncheon with local elected officials and representatives of local business community, where Stillman received an even warmer reception.

Fracking’s Human Health Impacts

Fracking for oil and gas is pumping and dumping contaminated water, mud, toxic chemicals and air pollution into our communities and environment. While human health impacts have gone largely unmeasured in California, active fracking in other states shows that fracking is a human health hazard for both oil and gas field workers and people living near oil and gas fields.

Overview

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is the process of injecting large quantities of water, toxic chemicals, sand and other materials (“propellant”) under high pressure into the ground to break up and dissolve rock and soil to extract oil and gas. Increasingly, dangerous concentrations of acids, including hydrofluoric acid, are used in a process called “acid well stimulation” that is essentially a variation on fracking.

Both processes — fracking and well stimulation — have been largely unregulated in California until very recently. Moreover, the health and environmental impacts here have not been routinely catalogued and reported. However, enough reporting exists from California and other states where fracking is also occurring to indicate that fracking’s health impacts can be and have been disturbing and profound.

Water and Fracking Fluids

Oil companies in North Dakota reported more than 1,000 accidental releases of oil, drilling wastewat er or other fluids in 2011, according to data obtained by ProPublica. Many more illicit releases went unreported, state regulators acknowledge. In several cases, spills turned out to be far larger than initially thought, totaling millions of gallons. Releases of brine, which is often laced with carcinogenic chemicals and heavy metals, have wiped out aquatic life in streams and wetlands and sterilized farmland. The effects on land can last for years, or even decades.

Fracking routinely employs numerous toxic chemicals, including methanol, benzene, naphthalene and trimethylbenzene. It can also expose people to harm from lead, arsenic and radioactivity that are brought back to the surface with fracking flowback fluid.

Cathy Behr, an emergency room nurse at a Colorado medical center spent ten minutes with gas field worker Clinton Marshall, who arrived complaining of nausea and headaches after a “fracturing fluid” spill. The fumes were so overpowering the emergency room was evacuated. A few days later Behr was diagnosed with multiple organ failure, including liver failure, respiratory distress and erratic blood counts. She was admitted to the ICU with the presumptive diagnosis of poisoning from an unknown chemical. The chemical was and is still considered to be a proprietary formula by the producer, Halliburton, a gas industry leader. It was later revealed to be a product with the trade name, Zetaflow.

Over five decades of oil drilling in Poplar Montana have contaminated Poplar’s drinking water to the point that, “Between 1999 and 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency issued five emergency orders to three oil companies, forcing them to, among other things, build a drinking
Los Osos: Last Chance

Can this basin be saved?

Twin landmarks in the long struggle to save the Los Osos groundwater Basin— the adjudication of the basin and the approval of a sewer project—are about to be joined by two more: a basin plan prepared for the Superior Court by Los Osos water purveyors and the County as parties to the adjudication, and a Resource Water Management Plan to be presented to the California Coastal Commission as a condition of the County’s permit to build the Los Osos Wastewater Project.

The Sierra Club and the Los Osos Sustainability Group were on the front lines of the fight to make the County do the sewer right, circa 2005-2010, forcing the County to scrap its plans to dump treated wastewater outside the aquifer, inevitably depleting the basin, and instead recycle and reuse the water. The LOSG reevaluated the official calculations of the rate at which seawater intrusion is contaminating the aquifer, persuading the County Planning Commission to discard the outdated, overly conservative figures it was relying on and put the urgent need to halt seawater intrusion front and center in a drastically revised sewer project.

On August 11, the Sierra Club, following up on a detailed technical submission the LOSG sent to the Coastal Commission last May, sent the County a letter—coining the Coastal Commission, the Regional Water Board, Golden State Water Company, & T Mutual Water Company and the Los Osos Community Services District—urging them to take specific actions to improve the LOSG Wastewater Project’s Recycled Water Management Plan (RWMP) and adjudicated Basin Plan.

The sewer project’s Coastal Development Permit requires that the recycled water plan “maximize the health and sustainability of the ground and surface waters.” We pointed out that the RWMP programs the County has been proposing to implement, by themselves or in

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Executive Director Greenspace – The Cambria Land Trust

Greenspace seeks a candidate who understands the ecological attributes and challenges to the environment on the Central Coast. Its mission is to protect the area’s ecological systems, cultural resources and marine habitats through land acquisition and management, public education and advocacy.

Full time with an initial one-year contract. The current executive director will remain on staff part time to support the transition. Pursuing funding for conservation and related projects will be a job priority. Energy and commitment are a must. Salary will be negotiated.

For a full job description contact Wayne Attoe, President, Greenspace – The Cambria Land Trust, PO Box 1505, Cambria CA 93428, or wayneattoe@gmail.com. For more background, go to www.greenspacecambria.org. Application deadline is Nov. 1, 2014.
The Bioneers are Coming

It's back! Bioneers, the environmental and social justice idea celebration, returns to the Central Coast on Friday and Saturday, October 24-25 at a new venue, the SLO Grange Hall.

With something for everyone, CC Bioneers will feature speakers, workshops and field trips on eleven different topics over the two days, including ecosystem restoration, youth activism, food and farming, indigenous knowledge, economics and biomimicry.

New this year will be a World Café, led by David Shaw, a permaculture and whole systems designer, facilitator, educator and co-founder of the Common Ground Center at U.C. Santa Cruz. He will be assisted by local graphic recorder Ruth Rominger in helping conference participants synthesize what they are seeing at the conference to actively shape the future of our community.

Featured Bioneers keynotes recorded at the National Conference in Marin the weekend before will include Naomi Klein in capitalism vs. climate, Paul Stamets on how mushrooms can help us survive Extinction 6x and Eve Ensler on why Our Generation Was Born to Change the World. Arielle Klagsbrun's talk will be on Why People Need to Get Arrested: the Climate Crisis Requires Bold Action. And Chloe Maxmin, the force behind Divest Harvard, will give us the rundown on how to get there.

Speaking of the climate movement, this year's local keynote address on Friday, October 24, on The Climate Justice Project, will feature UCSB Professor of Sociology John Foran and UCSB doctoral candidates, Corrie Ellis and Summer Gray. They will talk about their trip to the Warsaw COP 19 and the Global Youth Climate Justice Movement.

Summer will premiere her new film Not Yet the End of the World.

Field trips this year will feature an all-day pre-conference trip on October 23 to see the Hi Mountain Condor Lookout above Pozo. Your reward for the rugged ride up will be a spectacular 360° view that stretches from the Carizo to Point Sal to Pismo Beach.

Docents will talk about the condor recovery program, show you how to use the telemetry equipment to track tagged condors, and talk about the millions of years of geology you are viewing. Cal Poly students will discuss the work they do at the lookout while school is out, trapping and counting wildlife.

On Friday morning we will see the future of farming in drought-stricken Paso Robles when we visit Kukulkan Vineyard, where the vines and walnut trees are completely dry-farmed. Kevin Jussila will explain how he manages on 85,000 gallons of water per year while the neighboring vineyards use over 200,000 per week. You will have the opportunity to taste the difference in the wine. On Saturday you will have a chance to see how cohousing works during a tour of Tierra Nueva Cohousing.

The program rounds out with a conference bookstore hosted by the Central Coast Bioneers web site www.centralcoastbioneers.org.

Pulld for the Pismo Preserve

On July 30, SLO Land Conservancy biologist Brooke Langle came to our general meeting at the Steynberg Gallery in SLO to talk about the Conservancy’s campaign to acquire the Pismo Preserve.

In addition to the benefits that the purchase of the 900-acre ranch would confer by preserving water quality, chaparral, coast woodlands and habitat for the steelhead and red-legged frog, the acquisition would open up ten miles of new public trails and provide “views you don’t get anywhere else – all of Edna Valley, the neighboring vineyards use over 200,000 per week. You will have the opportunity to taste the difference in the wine. On Saturday you will have a chance to see how cohousing works during a tour of Tierra Nueva Cohousing.

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A Wild Time Was Had by All

Sierra Club supporters converged on the Tolosa Winery south of San Luis Obispo on the night of August 3 for the Santa Lucia Chapter’s annual fundraiser. The theme of the event was “The Face of the Wild,” with live and silent auctions of nature art and masks by local artists, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Wilderness Act, which has resulted in the preservation of 110 million acres of public land as unspoiled wilderness since 1964.

Guests were serenaded by the music of Moonpie while indulging in grilled market vegetable skewers, Peacock Farms tomato mezzo sauce, bacon-wrapped dates, mini smoked fish tacos, rosemary chicken skewers and more, catered by Two Cooks Catering, and, of course, Tolosa Wines. Members of the Cal French Donors Circle enjoyed a VIP tour of the winery with winemaker Larry Brooks and a barrel tasting.

Volunteer event coordinators Sandy Simon and Victoria Carranza oversaw the logistics of the event, including live and silent auctions. Under the organizing hand of former Chapter Chair Karen Merriam, community members young and old expressed their “faces of the wild” by creating hand-held masks that were displayed, worn and sold. Three masks judged the most creative by the jury panel were auctioned off in the live auction, along with local artwork and two-week-long South African photo safaris.

Congresswoman Lois Capps, a long-time environmental advocate and chair of the National Marine Sanctuaries Caucus was the keynote speaker. “We have some of the most diverse habitats and ecosystems, right on the Central Coast, of any place in North America,” she said. “We have a responsibility to protect these places for future generations.”

Matt Sayles of the California Wilderness Alliance spoke on the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, a bill that Capps introduced in May to protect 245,500 acres of wilderness, safeguard 159 miles of wild and scenic rivers in the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument, and establish the 400-mile Condor Trail from Los Angeles to Monterey. Representatives Julia Brownley and Sam Farr are co-sponsoring the legislation. Santa Lucia Chapter Executive Committee member Greg McMillan said, “My family has lived in this area for six generations and it is my heart. I own and operate a small scale grass-fed beef operation on family land and have planted an olive orchard. We are blessed to live in an area that contains some of the most rural and wild lands in the West, but the pressures on this land are great. The Central Coast Heritage Protection Act will ensure that our wildest lands and rivers remain intact.”

Denny Mynatt Wins Chapter Founder’s Award and Congressional Recognition

Denny Mynatt has been serving as Print Media Coordinator for the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club for over ten years. As such, he’s the reason why the Santa Lucia gets into the mail and correctly delivered every month. At the Face of the Wild event, the Chapter honored Denny with our Founder’s Award and Congressional Recognition.

“Ninety percent of everything in life is about showing up,” said Executive Committee member Victoria Carranza, who elaborated on Denny’s tasks: “He puts all 2,200 printed copies into his car, hauls them to the Senior Center, unloads those 2,200 copies for the volunteer labeling group, tags the bags, matches the mail bags and the labeled copies in zip code order, checks to see that all those copies get into the right bags, puts those 2,200 copies back in his car, hauls them to the post office, hauls those 2,200 copies back out of his car and onto a loading dock, and hands over the bulk mail forms — which make an IRS Form 1040 look like a child’s poem — perfectly filled out. He shows up at the office every single day, and every month he oversees a complex, physically demanding process, with no supervision, no complaints, no mistakes, and not much in the way of reward — until now. It’s my great personal pleasure, on behalf of the executive committee, to bestow the Santa Lucia Chapter’s highest honor, the Kathleen Goddard Jones Award, on Denny Mynatt.”

Congresswoman Lois Capps then presented Denny with a Certificate of Congressional Recognition, saying “Denny represents the best of our nation’s principles and values.”
Now’s the Time: Help Heidi Run!

By Joe Morris, Outings Chair

By now, most chapter members probably know that Heidi Harmon, endorsed by the Sierra Club, has taken on the challenge of running for State Assembly District 35, representing SLO County, Santa Maria and Lompoc.

She faces a comfortable incumbent, Katcho Achadjian, who “has both private and political ties to the oil industry and thousands of dollars in contributions from the oil and fuel industries” (Santa Maria Sun). His Assembly votes have reflected that allegiance in their consistent opposition to legislation for clean energy. Katcho voted against Assembly Bill 2145, which would have improved access to public transportation, and voted for AB 804, which would prevent local communities from making their own decisions about energy rather than continue at the mercy of the big utilities.

As Heidi has pointed out, Katcho is an affable man, who may show up for your son’s birthday party, but not for his future. People (including myself) who talk with her are enthused by her articulate grasp of today’s social problems and her commitment to solve them. Her passion is the environment and doing something about climate change, which is fast becoming the defining issue of our time.

Katcho has never had to really fight for his seat before. But things are different this time around. With great energy and an ability to connect to people, Heidi is crossing the District and speaking at house parties, fundraisers, fairs and other events. Her articles about climate change and clean energy, drought solutions, a living wage and education have appeared repeatedly in local papers like the Tribune and New Times. She’s been interviewed several times on local radio. Katcho has been noticeably absent.

As you read this, we are in the crucial post Labor-Day months of September and October — the final campaign stretch before the November 4 election. We have a unique chance now, probably our only one for years, to elect someone who has the potential of becoming the environmental conscience in Sacramento. If people like you and me don’t support her, who will? If we don’t do it now, when? Here are some ways you can help:

1. Go to her website, www.heidiharmon.org and learn more about her: the issues, the people who endorse her, her platform, and her next appearances.
2. Donate, and please be generous. You can do it online with a credit card. Running for office is expensive these days.
3. Contact Heidi and put in some hours volunteering — two, twenty, or whatever. There are a bunch of things to do right now, like sending out letters, helping out at a house party, putting up signs, etc.

I’m having fun working on a grassroots campaign with people who really care about the things I do. I bet you will, too.

Call for Candidates

2015 Executive Committee nominations open

The world’s most democratic environmental organization needs you! Yes, Santa Lucia Chapter member, you can run for Executive Committee and have a say in decision-making in the Sierra Club. The elected Club leader. The Executive Committee is an administrative body; we need people who can take minutes, organize committees, inspire participation and/or organize members. Conservationists are welcome, but a member also needs volunteers who like to handle the needs common to all organizations. If you have some time and would like to help this great organization, please volunteer to run for a seat on the Executive Committee. Each winning candidate will be elected to a three-year term. The Executive Committee meets monthly at the Chapter office in SLO. You may nominate yourself or suggest anyone else to any member of the committee. Members may also run by petition, signed by 25 members of the Chapter in good standing.

Nominations will be accepted until 5 p.m. Monday, September 22. You may submit nominations to sierralucian@gmail.com or Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93430.

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Santa Lucian • Sept. 2014
The City should require, not "encourage," project designs that minimize drainage concentrations and impervious coverage.

Drop the biologically dubious concept of "offsite mitigation." The idea that protecting land elsewhere will make up for habitat reduced or destroyed by development is a recipe for habitat fragmentation, violating the fundamental principle of wildlife biology: the value of open space as an ecosystem and habitat increases when the size of the contiguous area in- creases, and declines as size is re- duced. Until the City is prepared to show that off-site lands always pro- vide not only equivalent acreage but equivalent recreation values and identical biota, and the research and confirmation of such values can be shown to be a regular staff function when determining mitigation, per- formed by credentialed personnel with the ability to carry out such an evaluation – including monitoring and follow-up to ensure those values continue in perpetuity – the concept of off-site mitigation should be removed from City policy.

Implement a builder incentive program that will encourage new homes to be built with onsite water recycling system included. Earlier this year, the City of Lancaster announced that Homes created the "Double ZeroHouse," which achieves net-zero energy and uses zero fresh water for irrigation, recycling 99% of drain water via a gray water system, and 80% of the energy via a gray water heat recovery system that extracts energy from drainwater and uses it to preheat water in the home’s water heater. Lancaster is pursuing the goal of become America’s first net-zero city. San Luis Obispo should join it.

Support the use and development of biodiesel fueling stations, EV recharging stations in the San Luis Obispo area, not just compressed natural gas fuelling when a majority favoring a single type of alternative fuel is clearly inappropriate as policy and inadequate to meet the City’s overall planning goals for energy use and pollution reduction.

Introduce unbundled parking, congestion pricing, shared parking, fair price policies, positive transporta- tion demand management (TDM) and the other components of an Intelligen- t Parking program for schools and government buildings, with the goal of creating a Request for Proposal process for full implementation. There is no such thing as "free parking," which always increases the cost of housing and reduces wages due to higher employer costs of providing parking. Unpriced parking is often "bundled" with building costs, which means that a certain number of spaces are automatically included with building purchases or leases. Unbundling parking means that parking is sold or rented sepa- rately. Parking policies that eliminate or reduce minimum parking require- ments have been shown to be one of the least costly tools to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Per the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, unbundling car parking costs has reduced parking requirements up to 30% in cities where this has been implemented, reducing vehicle traffic, congestion, accidents, energy con- sumption, pollution emissions and consumer costs. Reducing parking subsidies promotes equity, so transit users and other non-drivers are not subsidizing drivers. People who take public transit or walk do not have to pay higher prices at stores to pay for parking or receive reduced wages because their employers spend money to provide parking to employees.

30th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day

The California Coastal Commission has announced the 30th California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state’s largest volunteer event. The cleanup will take place at more than 800 locations around the state on Saturday, September 20, from 9 a.m. to noon. The Cleanup is the State’s largest effort to remove the debris that has accumulated on our beaches and inland shorelines over the past year, bringing tens of thousands of volun- teers out annually to protect the marine wildlife and habitat that can be badly damaged by marine debris.

ECOSLO has been organizing Coastal Cleanup Day locally since 2005. Last year, over 1,600 volunteers removed over 5,700 pounds of marine debris from 29 beaches in the Obispo District. Statewide in 2013, nearly 60,000 volunteers picked up nearly 750,000 pounds of debris. Marine debris can be harmful and even fatal to wildlife, which in turn can damage our state’s economy, and can even become a human health hazard. Organizers are urging all participants to take part in the BYO (Bring Your Own) campaign, designed to encour- age volunteers to help decrease the ecological footprint of the Cleanup. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own bucket or reusable bag, glovers, and reusable water bottle so that they won’t have to use the disposable items that the Commission supplies.

To sign up for the SLO County Coastal Cleanup, go to theecco- solo.com/ccd_2014, or contact Krista Burke at (805) 544-1777 or membership@ecoslo.org.

Basis continued from page 2

discarded, once they get control of the board of a water district there’s no mystery as to how they’ll vote on matters before the board. (The most telling moment in the legislative process came when a Senate committee amended the bill to require actual management of the basin, including water meters and monitoring, and PRAAGS and PRO Water Equity immediately withdrew their support from the bill because the bill had become “complicated.”)

Sheilah Siegel is in the mix. Lawyers and lobbyists in the employ of the billionaire lord of a Central Valley almond dynasty – and current owner of Justin Vineyards – were all over AB 2453. Google “kern water reseck,” minus quotation marks, to view the unique history of the relationship between this water district take-over artist and California’s groundwater. You get a pretty good idea of why the biggest player over the Paso basin might want this district structured in such a way that the guys with the most acres stand to control the most votes. Our County Supervisor system is a conspiracy theory. Water speculators call it a business plan.

All of the above foretells the likely outcome of the process the County Board of Supervisors ordered for and on which they have bet the farm. That outcome was also foreseeable when a majority of the Supervisors refused to consider three simple amendments to AB 2453 that the Sierra Club proposed as the bill neared a vote on the Senate floor in August:

- Amend the bill to read: “The import of foreign water to the basin, export of native water from the basin, and the storage of excess State Water allocations for the basin by other entities is prohibited.” (The storage of excess State Water allocations in the basin is the neat trick whereby another district can store its “paper water” in this basin via its theoretical storage capacity when that water’s not needed, then lay claim to real water when it is needed.)

- Amend the bill to read: “District board elections shall transition to registered voter elections. In two years, three of the six directors in the three landowner classes shall be elected by registered voters living within the district; in 4 years the remaining three directors in the landowner classes shall be elected by registered voters living within the district.” (The Supervisors claimed this would disenfranchise non-resident landowners. But regard- less of who’s on the district board, all water projects would require passage of a Proposition 218 vote. Prop. 218 votes are acreage-based. When projects are proposed, those who will bear the most will have the most votes.)

Amend the bill to read: “Candidates for the six directors elected pursuant to this subdivision may be within any land- owner class.” With that language intact, the largest landowners can run candidates for all the seats in all three landowner classes – small, medium and large. Guest which candidates will have all the money they need to blanket the district, get out the vote, and secure a majority? That’s called seizing the advantage to protect your interests, and when the law allows it, that’s what is done by entities with the resources to do so. Why would they not? Is it hard to see where this is going: A district that, as structured, inevitably will be run by people whose main purpose will be importing water for a few vineyards and ensuring that rural residents pay for it, and whose demonstr- ated lack of interest in managing the basin could cost the state its one major aquifers. A dozen local, state and national public interest organizations saw the serious problems with the bill; our county supervisors and newspaper of record did not.

Only a failed district formation vote, the State of California, and/or an adjudicated basin can save us now.
conjunction with the provisions of the Basin Plan, will not maximize benefits on the Basin. This is the chance for all parties to address the severe, long-term seawater intrusion problem in the Los Osos Basin, reverse it, and establish a sustainable water supply for the community and vital habitats of the Morro Bay National Estuary. We asked for:

- A requirement for an immediate and thorough seawater intrusion assessment with semi-annual updates. The assessment should measure and evaluate the condition of each aquifer and the entire Basin, providing adequate data and analysis to show current conditions and changes since the 1970’s, along with predicted impacts from drought and climate change (less rainfall/higher sea levels).
- Designation of the Basin as a high-priority, threatened basin.
- A County Basin Management Ordinance as provided for in the Basin planning agreement, with measurable, time-specific, and enforceable objectives to reverse seawater intrusion as soon as possible. The ordinance should also ensure all pumping in the Basin is monitored, conservation and recycled water is maximized, and pumping is limited if necessary.
- A provision that conservation, recycled water use, and low impact development (LID) are maximized and given ample opportunity to reverse seawater intrusion before outside sources of water or desalination are pursued. (LID provides the triple benefit of reducing water use, reducing polluted runoff, and increasing Basin recharge with clean rainwater.)
- Improvements to the LOWWP recycled water use program to prioritize recycled water reuse in the Western and Central Basin in order to maximize recycled water and seawater intrusion offset. Improvements should include added recycled water pipes and connections to allow a greater reduction in potable water use. They should also maintain/improve water balance in all parts of the Basin and optimize management options.
- Improvements to the LOWWP conservation program to achieve an aggressive conservation target and encourage the elimination of potable water for outdoor use. The program should include a stronger outreach program to the community informing residents of the seawater intrusion problem (including radio and TV spots), a stronger indoor program (e.g., a stronger washer replacement program, more options, leak detection and repair), and a complete outdoor conservation program with grey water, rainwater harvesting, and LID options.

We suggested that the County ask SLO Green Build to expand the septic system repurposing program into a comprehensive outdoor program. The $5 million the Coastal Development Permit requires for conservation should be spent to maximize this program, with any remaining money spent on improving recycled water programs.

- Consistent with permit conditions,

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Crazy continued from page 8

activist Lynne Harkins proposed, and the Sierra Club funded, testing for mercury in Santa Rosa Creek, downstream from the abandoned and unremediated Oceanic mercury mine. She found mercury at four locations, with the highest concentration at the mouth of the creek.

The CSD’s new trick: stepping aside with the highest concentration at the mouth of the creek.

The Community Commission invoked its authority to determine if the project was consistent with California’s Coastal Management Program. In December 2011, the Commission unanimously determined that it was not, blasting the district for the lead agency switcheroo, terming the test wells project “a complete waste of public funds” and noting the “avoidance of proper procedure” in the attempt to gain a permit. Why spend years on securing permits for a desal test project at a site where you know you will not be allowed to build a desal plant—twice? Why not design water storage tanks correctly in the first place? This is just a highlights reel of the CCSD’s greatest whiffs. In August, Cambria Water Watch posted a very

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That was then In 2009, the Los Osos Sustainability Group showed the County that the rate of seawater intrusion into the Los Osos basin over the previous four years was at least four times faster than had been thought. And now...

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The State Legislature is emphasizing water use efficiency via conservation and recycled water as the first priority in managing threatened supplies. With the Los Osos Basin facing the threat of severe seawater intrusion, the worst drought on record, changes in pumping and increasing sea level rise from climate change, we are urging actions we feel are necessary to allow the Los Osos Basin to continue to support estuarine and riparian habitat in Coastal Zone, the Community of Los Osos, and the farmland over the Basin.
Classifieds

Next issue deadline is September 15.
To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact:
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P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
sierrachbl@gmail.com

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All our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805 unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 18. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter’s outings schedule, or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Chair Joe Morris, 549-0355. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Sun., Sept. 7th, 9 a.m. Irish Hills Hike. Join us on a slightly strenuous 6-mile hike in the Irish Hills, leading to an abandoned manganese mine. Trail was built mostly by members of Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bike Organization. Bring water, snacks, hat, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, and dress in layers for changing weather. Meet at southern end of Madonna Rd., next to DeVaul Park, at trail entrance to Irish Hills. Leader: Bill Waycott 459-2103 or bill.waycott@gmail.com.

Sat., Sept. 13th, 9:30 a.m. Guadalupe/Paradise Beach Hike. Moderate 6-mile hike along pristine Guadalupe Beach to Mussel Rock and beyond, duration about 5-6 hrs. Bring water, lunch, winch rope, and duck calls for layers in varying weather. Lunch also afterward for those interested. From Hwy 101 in Santa Maria, take Main St./Hwy 166 to end at Guadalupe Beach. Meet near interpretive signs and picnic tables. Rain cancel. Leader: Joan Jones Holtz, 934-7292 or kenya683@msn.com.

Sun., Sept. 14th, 10 a.m. San Simeon State Beach Hike. Three-mile, 300 ft. gain hike through meadows, pine forest, grassy mesa, and coastal scrub. Enjoy a variety of footbridges, boardwalk, and dirt trail, viewing mountains, valleys, and ocean. About 3 hrs. Meet at Washburn Day Use Area, about 2 miles north of Cambria, left off Hwy 1. Leader: Vicki Marchenko, 528-5567 or vmarchenko57@gmail.com.

Thurs., Sept. 18th, 7 p.m. SLO Through Painters’ Eyes. An evening of pure pleasure! Five eminent artists from SLOPE, San Luis Outdoor Painters for the Environment, will display their favorite depictions of land and seascapes throughout our county. EachGallery will discuss how they went about creating their works. There will be time to chat with the artists and Denise Schryver, president of SLOPE, which represents more than 15 professional painters. Go to www.SLOPE- Painters.com to see more. Conservation news will begin the meeting. Steyenberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Sat., Sept. 20th, 8:30 a.m. Vicente Flat to Naomi’s Summit Hike. Vicente Peak is one of the wildest places for those interested. From Hwy 1. Meet at Washburn Day Use Area, about 1.7 miles north of Main West End in Cambria. Extreme heat will postpone this outing. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sun., Sept. 21st, 10 a.m. Sycamore Springs Trekking Pole Hike.计划 is to lead local Sierra Club hikes to model the benefits of using trekking poles effectively. This is a 2-mile, 600 ft. elevation change, hike. Meet near the entrance to Sycamore Springs Resort, 1215 Avila Beach Dr. Need to confirm beforehand with Leader: David Georgi, 458-5575 or hikingpales@gmail.com.

Sat., Sept. 27th, 8:30 a.m. Salmon and Spruce Creek Trails to Dutra Flat Camp. Moderate 8.4-mile, 2200 ft. gain hike in southern Big Sur. Beginning at the Salmon Creek trailhead, we will ascend through Spruce Creek Canyon, viewing Silver Peak, winding around grassy hills, and then dropping down into Dutra Camp. Possibility of ticks and poison oak on the trail. Bring lunch, water, and dress for the weather. Meet at Washburn Day Use Area in San Simeon State Park, off Hwy 1, about 2 miles north of Cambria. Probable stop for eats afterwards. If it is too hot, we will choose another destination, rain cancels. Leader: Gary Felsman, 473-3694.

Sun., Sept. 28th, 2 p.m. City Walk: Jazz Age San Luis Obispo to World War II. Where is the hotel where Hearst entertained his guests, the speakeasies of the twenties, and the original French Hospital? Find out and much more on a guided downtown stroll past historic stores, theaters, and hotels. Learn about SLO city life from the years of the Model T to Prohibition and Pearl Harbor. Meet at corner of Main and Windsor in Cambria. Joe Morris Sierra Club (805) 549-0355 dpj942@earthlink.net

Activities sponsored by other organizations

Field Tripping

Hello fellow Santa Lucians. My name is Greg McMillan. I serve on your Executive Committee and am the co-chair of the Development Committee for the chapter. I have some ideas for future events that might be of interest to you and will make a few bucks that we can use to further the efforts of the Chapter. I am asking for your input to see if this interest exists.

My proposal is to arrange a series of field trips to some of my favorite places in the world. These trips might be local and only a day or two in duration and range to multi day (up to two weeks) trips to more exotic and distant places. They would be limited to a small groups and would be escorted by yours truly and utilize local experts to interpret the local habitats.

The local trips might vary from 1-day small bus field trips to the Carizo Plain or other places nearby to 2 or 3-day trips to Yosemite, Death Valley, or other wild and environmentally important areas. The more far flung projects might go anywhere in the world. The Pantanal of Brazil is one of my favorite distant places for wildlife, a place of amazing flora and fauna and wonderful people. Another site of great interest to me is the Northern Jaguar Preserve in Northern Sonora, Mexico. It’s very difficult to get to but has been described to me as one of the wildest places in the world.

These trips would give you a chance to travel with like-minded folks and help your Chapter at the same time. Please get back to me at gregg@flyinggment.com. Please put “field trips” on the subject line. I await your input.

Sat., Sept. 6th, 9:45 a.m. Citizens Climate Lobby, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2201 Lawson Avenue, SLO. Learn what you can do to slow climate change and make a difference in our community. Become a climate activist and be part of the solution to the most pressing issue of our time. For more info, email: citizensclimatelobby@ gmail.com.

Sat., Sept. 13, 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Botanical Illustrations at SLO Botanical Gardens. Discover the art of observing and depicting nature structurally and aesthetically while enjoying fresh air and the outdoors. Join artist Barbara Renshaw, at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens as we stroll through the Garden sketching your favorite plants. No experience necessary. Bring a sketch book and watercolors, colored pencils, or pastels. Meet at the Garden’s purple entrance bridge. $5 for members/$10 public. More info at slobg.org/art. SLO county parking fee April – Sept. For more info, call 805-541-4000, x504 or email education@slobg.org.